Foreword
Future political direction of Bosnia and Herzegovina: listening out for the 'Silent Majority'

Over the past year, Oxford Research International, on behalf of the United Nations Development Programme with the support of the Royal Netherlands Government, has carried out the most comprehensive and thoroughgoing examination of the social and political health of BiH ever undertaken. Although this research places particular emphasis on the outcomes of the resettlement process, it provides a barometer of the views of all BiH citizens. Our purpose was both to take stock some eleven years after the end of the conflict, and to seek out a consensus, if one could be found, on where BiH goes from here.

The research addresses many themes - general well being, notions of trust and social capital, politics and governance, corruption, identity, and crucially, citizens' perceptions of the future. Through a number of devices we 'test' the real versus the perceived, and the strength of feelings and motivations for political action. This is done with due regard to BiH's complex demography identifying similarities and differences between ethno-religious groups, age cohorts and regions.

The results of our work are genuinely surprising and challenge many myths about latter day BiH, and we believe have the potential to be path-breaking. Foremost, we find a population ahead of its political representatives and considerably more open to change. Yet it is also a population that is beset with disjunctures and contradictions. Perhaps the most serious of these disjunctures is the mismatch between positive personal perceptions of wellbeing, against collective feelings of dislocation and angst. This break between the micro and macro is common to transitional societies, but not on the scale found here in BiH.

These negative feelings are not merely material in

character. The lack of employment and economic opportunity clearly do figure strong, but so too does the metaphysical. Our results underline the absolute weakness of social bonds of trust, reciprocity and solidarity - what we might refer to as BiH's 'social capital'. Driving this is a basic confusion over identity and belonging, and a frustration and dissatisfaction with post-Dayton political structures. Citizens are universally pessimistic about the future and feel the country to be stagnating with no prospect of improvement. Within the youth cohort, this disenchantment is severe and takes the form of complete resignation. A staggering two thirds of young people indicate that they would leave the country if the opportunity presented itself. These perceptions also give rise to a general negativity which spills over into all manner of dissatisfactions - about service quality, governance failures and corruption - that are, by and large, not justified by individual experiences.

These latter findings will not be surprising to national commentators. Yet what is genuinely unexpected is the level of commonality on the diagnoses and potential answers to BiH's collective concerns. Majorities within each of BiH's communities favour reform of the state based on building a common identity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Moreover, only minorities within each community favour options based on exclusive identities and the de facto break-up of the country.

While it is also true these majorities have different 'first best' notions of how the country might be reconfigured, we find agreement can be found on the basis of second best preferences - the 'compromise model' being a single state with strong regions. And it is this, we assert, that is truly path breaking. It offers up the possibility of real lasting reform on the basis of widespread consent signalling a popular desire for change which is unapparent in the day to day political life.

To be clear the UNDP has no pre-conceived ideas of BiH future governance structure, but does believe our work lays the basis for a discussion and starting point for a dynamic deliberation, which might ultimately address ordinary dislocation of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina from public life.

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Introduction to the Intellectual Aims of the Study

Introduction

The primary aims of the research, as agreed with UNDP, are to collect, analyse and present comprehensive data on the socio-economic situation of returnees/displaced persons, and on the visions of the future of the population of BiH as a whole, through a variety of methodologies and instruments. To identify lessons learned through an examination of policy outcomes and identify support for wider future policy-making in BiH

The main methodologies used were quantitative analysis of a systematic representative sample survey of the BIH population complemented by qualitative research using focus groups drawn from both youth and adult groups in a spread of regional settings. Both the quantitative survey and the focus group discussions were preceded by 50 in-depth interviews with migrants, which yielded important information for the focus group discussion guide and pre-tested some of the variables for the quantitative survey.

Overall, this permitted dedicated comparative analysis of different types of households together with a data record on return and on visions of the future. At the quantitative level, this research complements a micro-census type programme by the BiH Agency of Statistics (BHAS), which, with the support of the UK government, surveyed around 80,000 BiH households in 2005/06. The BHAS Master Sample provided the methodological basis for this research.

The focus of this report is on policy-driven considerations regarding sustainable return and the determinants of popular visions of the future of BiH, ideas on democratic governance, constitutional changes, international influence and social inclusion. The aim of this report therefore, is to study the 'visions of the future' of the population of BiH and the role of displacement and return in contemporary BiH. One key question is whether policies which support returnees and non-returnees are part of visions of the future, or if in fact, other priorities are more pressing.

The report interprets governance broadly to include issues such as the desired constitutional arrangements for BiH, perceptions of political institutions, and political priorities as well as issues of process, including the perceptions of corruption in the political process. We take social inclusion to embrace issues such as reconciliation, integrating disaffected groups into the mainstream, reducing social tensions, as well as the more conventional senses such as including disadvantaged groups in economic activity, in the political process and in civic life more generally.

A primary aim of this research, therefore, was to allow the people of BiH themselves to 'have a voice' and to express their priorities for the future of the country, their feelings about issues of governance, their concerns over displacement and return, and their own experiences of social inclusion. In other words, we see this research as an important opportunity to give a voice to BiH's 'silent majority', not least of all to provide a fact-based alternative to the political rhetoric which sometimes tends to dominate public discussion. In order to achieve these aims, a set of themes for more detailed examination were agreed with UNDP.

For the focus groups, push and pull factors behind the decision to either return to their old neighbourhoods or to build an existence in the host community are explored together with the actual outcome of that decision, namely perceived gains and losses. Specifically, was the decision to return determined by expectations of assistance in the kin community? Social integration plays a role as discussants are encouraged to tell the research team to what degree they have been included in whatever community they now live, or, if in fact, they feel excluded in any important way. There have been significant policy initiatives to integrate displaced people and make their lives sustainable. How do discussants define and interpret the terms 'sustainable return' and 'sustainable integration'; are they the key to a durable solution? How do displaced people feel about the quantity and quality of any assistance they may have received, have distribution systems been equitable or have there been incidents of corruption? To turn to visions of the future, how do discussants see the role of the UN, exactly what policy interventions do they think are profitable and what advice do they have for the Head of the United Nations and the Minister of Human Rights and Refugees?

Overarching themes include sectional differences between men and women, returnees and non-returnees, minority and majority returnees and people in different age cohorts. In addition, the research team has conducted group discussions in other transformation societies. How do the groups in BiH differ? Is the research timely or has the world changed around the initial research concepts?

For the quantitative part, the first theme, '*General Well-Being*', focuses on the respondents' own experiences. How do they feel about their lives in BiH and how satisfied are they with their financial situation, their health, and their general well-being? Answering these questions gives us an initial picture of how people experience their lives in BiH today and whether there are particular groups, such as the displaced, who are disproportionately likely to be at a disadvantage and who might therefore be said to be socially excluded. In other words, which are the groups that feel particularly vulnerable? We also focus more specifically on wishes to emigrate, emigration being a particularly consequential reaction to dissatisfaction with the problems in one's country as analysed in Hirschman's classic study *Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organisations and States* (1970). For Hirschman, exit in the form of migration, voice in the form of protest and collective political action, and loyalty to the existing order are the main likely reactions to decline. In this first section we focus on desires to exit. (We turn to voice and loyalty in later sections.) How do these desires and intentions vary between the displaced, the returnees who were formerly displaced, and those who were never displaced? How do they differ between young and old, and various socio-economic groups?

Survey questions on feelings of well-being have also been asked in the World Values Surveys, and this gives us an opportunity to compare the current situation in BiH with that found in other transformation societies, particularly neighbouring countries and former Eastern-bloc countries. This enables us to calibrate the answers from our respondents and to see whether the level of well-being is more or less what might be expected in a transformation country or, instead, are particularly problematic.

The second theme of '*Trust*' deals with both social trust and trust in institutions. Social trust is often regarded as a key indicator of social cohesion and as a precondition for the smooth functioning of the society and its institutions. Social trust has become a key concept in recent academic and political debates and is one of the core elements of Putnam's theory of social capital which he introduced in his landmark study *Making Democracy Work* (1993) of the differences in the functioning of democracy in the north and south of Italy. Putnam sees declining trust as a major challenge for Western societies generally and as a crucial ingredient in governability. Lack of social trust is likely to be a particular problem in a country such as BiH with its history of conflict.

Political trust focuses on the sentiments of the citizens towards the key institutions of their society and gives us a sense of the legitimacy of the governance arrangements in the eyes of the population. Political trust featured prominently in the classic work of Almond and Verba on *The Civic*

Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy (1963) and is argued to be one of the key ingredients in generating a well-functioning democracy. In their view, a stable democracy requires an appropriate balance between popular participation and popular respect for the institutions of the society. We ask whether trust varies across different institutions, including international as well as domestic ones, and whether the various sections of society differ in their support for specific institutions. How widespread is confidence and trust in the central government in Sarajevo, for example, or is this support localised or sectional in character? Answers to such questions will give some idea of the scope these institutions have in deciding on or implementing policy. As Almond and Verba imply, lack of such trust is likely to mean that groups may take matters into their own hands, leading to a breakdown in democracy.

A further theme is the '*World of Politics*' more generally. Here we explore the other ingredient in the civic culture, namely respondents' own levels of political participation and involvement in the political process. We ask how involved people are in the political process, for example through participation in electoral politics, and what other forms of political participation they have undertaken, or might consider. Given BiH's recent violent past, an important question is how many people would contemplate the use of violence for political ends, and from what groups in society such people tend to be drawn.

We then turn to our respondents' main policy priorities for the future and the demands that they have for their political leaders. What are the concerns that citizens of BiH have as their highest priority - economic concerns, governance issues, and the fight against corruption, or issues of social inclusion and reconciliation such as developing national unity or dealing with war criminals and de-mining? And to which bodies do they attribute responsibility for dealing with these concerns? Answers to these questions give a clear view of respondents' own assessment of

what needs to be done to assist the future of BiH.

Longer-term visions of the future are central to the next theme of '*Change and Future*'. We ask what our respondents see as the strengths and weaknesses of contemporary BiH, whether they are content with the status quo or would prefer structural change, and in particular what form of constitution they would like in the longer term. A key question here is whether different sections of society can unite on any particular blueprint for the future or whether all the possible constitutional arrangements that have been proposed would be divisive. Lijphart's theory of consociational democracy has emphasised the importance of finding constitutional arrangements for plural societies that incorporate all the main sectional groups into the political process through various forms of power-sharing arrangement. As he argues in *Majority Rule versus Democracy in Deeply Divided Societies* (1997) his evidence suggests that simple majoritarian constitutions are not likely to be viable in the long run in such societies. At this stage in BiH the issue is therefore whether there are possible constitutional arrangements that might be acceptable to most groups without entrenching significant minorities.

Given its history of conflict and the manner of its resolution, the international community plays a large role in present day BiH and must be seen as a central part of the current constitutional arrangements. A natural question is therefore to ask how the respondents themselves see this international involvement, whether they wish bodies such as the UN to remain or to leave, and what they feel their role should be. This is the central focus of our next theme '*External Influence and the International Community*'.

A crucial aspect of governance, and one that is likely to be closely related to trust in particular political institutions and international organisations, and desires to preserve or eject such organisations, is the issue of corruption. This provides the focus of our next

theme, '*Corruption and Beliefs in Corruption*'. We ask first about people's perceptions of corruption, which institutions and organisations it is particularly likely to affect, and at what levels. But as well as focussing on perceptions we also ask about people's direct experience of corruption in their everyday lives. Following the well-known psychological theory of cognitive dissonance, it could be that peoples' beliefs about corruption are reflections of their attitudes towards those institutions, rather than the other way round, and people's actual experiences of corrupt practices therefore provide a valuable check on their perceptions. Also, the relationship between beliefs in corruption and overall views of BiH will be explored.

Our next theme is '*Self-identification*'. Identification with the nation-state is widely seen by political theorists as a key element promoting national unity and cohesion and providing a basis of legitimacy for the state's institutions and hence being functional for modern democracies. Conversely writers such as Gellner in his key text *Nations and Nationalism* (1983) see alternative identities as a major contributor to separatist nationalist movements. Empirical research in plural societies, such as the UK or Spain, has demonstrated the prevalence of 'dual identities' with many people identifying as, for example, both Scottish and British. Such dual identities do not appear to be at all threatening to national cohesion. Exclusive identities, however, where people reject the over-arching national identity and accept only the minority identity tend to be much more in favour of separatism or partition and to be prepared to act on this basis. A key issue for the future governance of BiH and the social inclusion of all sectors of society is therefore the prevalence of these primary, dual and exclusive identities and their structural location within society. Are there particular groups that lie outside the mainstream and present a challenge of civic incorporation?

A final theme related to governance issues is that of '*Media and media uses*'. The mass media, particularly in the historical past, have played crucial roles in

the development of the nation and the formation of what Benedict Anderson evocatively termed the imagined community of the nation (in his classic study *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 1983). Anderson focussed on the role of print capitalism in the emergence of the modern nation state. Our question is how the different mass media are suitable platforms for engaging in meaningful dialogue with the population, which media texts are trusted for news and if sectional differences play a role.

Running through all these themes, but also warranting a separate section in its own right, are the issues of '*Displacement, Diaspora and Return*'. We distinguish here between the displaced who have returned to their origins, the displaced who have not returned, and the non-displaced. We also need to recognise the existence of many people, the Diaspora, who have left BiH temporarily or perhaps permanently. Is their return perceived as profitable for BiH or are they likely to be rejected? The question of the social inclusion of the displaced and of the returnees is one of our most central themes. We can look at this from two perspectives. First we take the perspective of the displaced themselves and their own experiences particularly with respect to finding work, well-being, and social integration. Second we take the perspective of the wider society looking at attitudes towards the displaced and the Diaspora, support for their reintegration, the continuance of current measures, and the priority that these measures should have in competition with other claims on scarce resources. Can we say that issues of displacement and return have now been dealt with satisfactorily in the eyes of the population or do they remain policy priorities for the future?

While each of these themes will be analysed in its own right using a range of statistical tools, the last section is used to pull all the various themes together and place them in a relational framework. Correspondence analysis is used as a multi-dimensional tool to provide an overall picture.
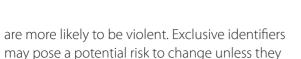
Executive Summary of Main Findings and Key Policy Recommendations

- The Oxford team fielded a nationally-representative survey with 3,580 respondents (+18). In addition, it completed 20 focus groups with displaced discussants in different locations across BiH. The study differs in terms of methodology (which follows the BHAS [1] Master Sample), low refusal rates, investment in local research staff training and a rigorous eight-stage quality control programme

- The survey gives a voice to the 'silent majority'

- It reports that people are content in their lives and, personally, feel in control. BiH compares favourably with other transformation countries in this respect. However, respondent's views of BiH as a country, its political actors and institutions are very negative. Beliefs in corruption are widespread and not substantiated by actual recent experiences. Optimism is relatively weak and there is a sense of standstill. Social trust is virtually non-existent

- The relationship between citizens and the political world is dominated by low interest and disengagement

- Identity and religious affiliation do not impact on the way people feel about themselves and society but there are significant statistical effects in institutional, political and constitutional assessments. Particularistic differences are essentially political in nature but do not appear to affect the fabric of BiH society

- Two thirds below the age of 30 wish to emigrate and the motivation of the young to stay in BiH emerges as a key challenge. At the same time, human resources, especially young people, are seen as the key asset of BiH. The greatest weaknesses are unemployment, the political world and corruption. The long-term vision for BiH is EU membership, and the EU is invited to influence the future of the country. Employment and economic progress appear as pre-conditions for achieving long-term goals

- For short-term policy aims, respondents are not interested in de-mining, prosecuting war-criminals, police reform and defence issues. Instead they opt for improvements in their living standards, a unified country and anti-corruption measures

- There is a powerful demand for general and constitutional change but views on change are divisive. A large majority aspires to a new political structure, preferably a centralised system. The status quo, division of BiH, Yugoslavia Mark II and three Entities are not wanted. Most aggregated support and least opposition is gathered by a centralist alternative with strong regions - or the Federal Republic of BiH

- While people intellectually understand that change is needed and the proposed overall direction of change is largely coherent, the vehicles of change are less clear. The population does not appear confident enough to initiate change. Some want to hold on to the certainties of socialist Yugoslavia, e.g. high dependency on state output. It remains unclear that BiH is not just a post-conflict country but also a transformation society

- There is a chasm between people's aspirations and their expectations

- More than eight in ten respondents ascribe to BiH citizenship, though 14% have exclusive identities. The latter tend to oppose EU membership and

are more likely to be violent. Exclusive identifiers may pose a potential risk to change unless they are brought closer into the mainstream

• Overall, return appears as a success: a majority of displaced people returned and migrants appear integrated in mainstream economy and society. However, continued return policies are not part of a long-term vision. Even displaced people no longer prioritise them. Policies, which benefit the whole population, come to the fore

• International institutions are not trusted but respondents know little about them and do not distinguish between them. A small majority supports a continued UN presence and advises the UN to promote human rights, improve living standards and fight corruption. Broadly, UN involvement in politics, education and positive discrimination for disadvantaged groups are not wanted

• A returning Diaspora is seen as an economic asset and its re-integration in BiH is not perceived as competition for existing structures

• Some of the survey results are echoed in the focus groups: the need for employment and economic progress, dependency on institutional output, beliefs in corruption and a lack of information about the UN

• In the groups, the decision to return appears as mainly emotive, the decision to stay more rational. Returnees confirm that institutional assistance helped them to restart their lives. They say that sustainability means jobs, and, to a lesser degree, capital equipment and channels for marketing produce. Non-returnees were able to integrate in host communities. They received little assistance and appear more self-directed

• Group return is more efficient than individual return

• Perceived inequity in assistance-delivery atomises individuals and challenges community solidarity

• Local intermediaries, not the UN, are held responsible for perceived corruption

• The UN is perceived as remote. It is advised to create greater awareness for its structures and policies, minimise its use of local intermediaries and monitor the quality of assistance. In terms of economic progress older participants suggest collective ideas which promote secure employment. Young people propose future-oriented entrepreneurial models and seek improvements in their marketable skills

• The Head of the UN is perceived as a powerful authority and guarantor against corruption. She is advised to enter into direct and meaningful dialogue with policy recipients, improve UN-transparency and support initiatives which lead to more employment and new businesses

• Advice to the MHRR[2] Minister echoes advice to the UN. Trust in his capacity is affected by negative attitudes to State government. The Minister is asked to safeguard equal rights and encouraged to realise political promises

Policies

The survey establishes two long-term aspirations:

1. Joining the EU and inviting the EU to help shape the future of BiH

2. Constitutional change and a new political structure

It is also clear that before long-term aspirations can be realised, short- and mid-term policies are needed to prepare the ground. Not least of all, the potential risks associated with constitutional change require particular attention. There are four short to mid-term development areas.

2 BiH Ministry for Human Rights and Refugees

1. Economic progress, employment opportunities and SMEs

National economic policy goes beyond the scope of this research, though the data produce three concrete ideas and employment opportunities are not seen as coterminous with paid work. First, policy designs could include initiatives which increase the number of SMEs. Second, support for local producers to distribute and market agricultural produce could prove beneficial. Third, as the Diaspora is clearly identified as an economic asset, its return to BiH could be lucrative

2. A comprehensive package for the young

This development area could include initiatives which support small-businesses run by young people, an enhancement to the marketable skills of the young, and grants and loans to meet auxiliary cost of education. The latter could support broader access to tertiary education. Also, fixed-term education abroad, additional vocational training and more room in the media for youth themes are key. Overall, support for greater engagement by the young in public spheres appears vital

3. Reconciliation and social integration

In order to address low social trust and cohesion, the establishment of a Reconciliation Commission may prove a significant formal step. This measure requires complementary support from initiatives which help reduce the divisions between exclusive identifiers and mainstream BiH society. This may also reduce the risk associated with constitutional change

4. Communication, trust, fighting corruption and civic engagement

TV and print are identified as suitable vehicles for developing public information and promoting civic education. The fight against beliefs in corruption and unrealistic negativity about the situation in BiH appear as appropriate starting points. The dissemination of survey results in order to stimulate fact-based public opinion formation emerges as important as the use of deliberative democracy and townhall-meetings to provide institutional contexts for the popular discussion of pertinent themes

Conclusions, Lessons Learned and Policy Advice

Section 1 [3]
Conclusions to the Quantitative Survey

This survey is based on a nationally-representative sample, which reflects the opinions of the residents of BiH within a known margin of error [4]. This report selects what the authors consider to be the key points and the analysis is by no means exhaustive. Once policy-makers prioritise areas for future intervention, further data analysis can yield more targeted and more detailed information. The large sample size will be helpful in segmenting the data for identifying sub-groups.

One central aim of this research is to give the voters of BiH a voice. Beyond the political rhetoric of public debate, this research enables the 'silent majority' of BiH to be heard. Another aim is to compare BiH with other transformation countries.

BiH respondents feel happier, wealthier and less worried than one might expect, given the negative evaluations of macro-spheres. The survey shows that in most cross-national comparisons, BiH general well-being scores rank at the midfield-level. In subjective health, however, BiH does not compare favourably. Regarding perceived living standards, there are some sectional differences but they are not extreme: younger

people do better than older people and education plays a role. Displacement status produces a smallish effect. There are no indications that any particular group is systematically disprivileged. Evaluations of conditions in the immediate neighbourhood demonstrate that respondents think police-work and education are not a problem. Local government services and the availability of health services receive a balance between positive and negative scores. The unavailability of jobs, especially secure jobs, is seen as highly problematic. The issue of employment emerges as a critical theme in this survey, and the immediate social environment is where respondents experience the lack of employment opportunities.

The survey shows that social trust in BiH is virtually non-existent. In international comparisons, BiH is relegated to the last position. This means that in a key indicator of social cohesion, BiH is outperformed by all other transition countries which the World Values Survey programme covers. Also, in perceptions of social fairness BiH does not do well; most respondents say that they do not expect much fairness from others. While at the personal level people report relatively high life satisfaction, the lack of trust in others and in society at large appears as highly problematic, indicating that a core component of social capital (Putnam) is under-developed.

Overwhelmingly, BiH citizens see the situation in their country as 'bad'. In contrast to their evaluation of personal spheres, respondents take a dim view of present conditions at the macro-level. In fact, there is a chasm between people's description of their personal circumstances and their assessments of the country at large. A negative view of the national situation is compounded by relatively low trust in the institutions of BiH. Averaged across all scores, there is slightly more mistrust but there are important exceptions. Public service TV, and, on balance, municipal authorities are trusted. Most of all, there is relatively high trust in the police.

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3 It may be difficult to read the conclusions as a stand-alone document. The arguments are developed in the analysis of the research results and important details can be critical for an understanding of key issues

4 Please refer to the technical report

Half the sample trusts the EU but few trust other international organisations (IOs), the judiciary, and the State government in Sarajevo. Hardly anyone trusts political parties. Among international organisations the UN is the least trusted but the differences are small. In fact, respondents do not distinguish much between international institutions. Overall, and with exceptions, popular respect for the institutions of BiH society is low. The parties and the State government are accorded lower trust scores than political institutions at the municipal or Entity level. Cantons are not seen to be essential. Institutional trust is a concrete expression of system acceptance. It gauges a sense of the legitimacy of the governance arrangements in the eyes of the population. It appears that trust needs to grow before greater political legitimacy, especially at State-level, can be achieved.

Four in ten BiH citizens say they would leave the country if given an opportunity, though there are no differences between displaced and non-displaced respondents. Critically, two thirds of respondents aged between 18 and 30 state that they would like to go abroad. Such powerful desires for selective out-migration illustrate that young people especially have a low commitment to BiH. The creation of conditions which are likely to motivate young BiH citizens to remain in their country emerges as a key challenge.

Beliefs in corruption are widespread. In particular, most respondents believe that corruption is pervasive at all levels of the public sector and that most officials assume their positions on non-meritocratic grounds. Also international organisations are seen to be corrupt albeit to a much lesser degree. Perceptions of corruption in assistance-delivery systems for returnees correlate with perceptions of overall IO corruption. Low esteem in the country and low trust in its institutions are associated with strong beliefs in corruption. However, the small number of recent actual experiences does not match beliefs in the

extent of corruption. Beliefs in corruption emerge as part of a general syndrome of disaffection rather than accurate representations of corrupt processes in government.

Regarding the inclusion of BiH citizens in civic life, there are a number of key observations. In no other transformation country are there more voters who say they are not at all interested in politics. Younger cohorts especially are affected by low interest. Also, political action scores are low with voting outstripping political communication. Conversely, twice as many respondents in BiH compared with France have some appetite for political violence. Nevertheless, this is a minority position. BiH does not emerge as a country where voters are actively engaged in the shaping of political decisions. In fact, people appear mistrustful of political structures, and, beyond voting, do not seem ready to participate. Overall, the relationship between citizens on the one hand and the political world and its actors on the other emerges as one of disengagement rather than involvement.

Identity measures include both religious affiliation and identity. Though it is associated with religion, identity plays a critical role. The survey questionnaire administered a two-stage question on identity which reveals that more than eight in ten respondents do not have a problem with BiH national identity. Nearly half say they are primarily BiH citizens; most others subscribe to a dual identity. Critically, 14.2% or 504 out of 3,580 respondents reject a BiH citizen's identity and thus ascribe to an exclusive identity ('the 504').

Broadly, measures of well-being, such as life satisfaction, perceived living standards, social trust, and perceptions of fairness are not affected by identity measures. Other independent variables explain the differences. Nonetheless, religious affiliation and identity become important explanatory parameters when they are regressed against variables measuring institutions, politics and, crucially, constitutional issues. This demonstrates

that the way people in BiH feel about themselves and about the fabric of society is independent of identity measures. One may argue that particularistic differences are essentially political in nature. In the eyes of its population young people and people generally are the key strength of BiH: human and not natural resources are identified as the main asset. As for weaknesses, unemployment, corruption and politics and its actors are prioritised. This establishes a profile of pros and cons which can be of guidance in overall policy design. As for visions of the future for BiH, the central focus of this research, seven in ten say 'in the EU'. This is particularly striking since this result emerges from an open-ended question. This gives a clear direction in long-term aspirations.

As for short-term priorities (next twelve months), an improvement in living standards is the top concern. In conjunction with unemployment as the greatest perceived problem, the call for the use of economic levers resonates throughout the survey. In addition to demands for national unification, improvements to the infrastructure and reducing corruption surface as priorities. Non-priorities include the prosecution of war-criminals, de-mining, national defence, police reform and education.

Principally, respondents expect that the political world rather than individuals should take care of their respective policy priorities. This indicates two things. One is that there is a belief in 'Big Government' as a solution to people's problems. Dependency on state output ('delivery van') is also found in other variables. The other is that people's relatively low trust in institutions and their negative attitudes towards the political world are a commentary on their perceptions of the current arrangements, which also influence their expectations for the immediate future. At the same time, this does not debar them from aspiring to a better future.

In individual spheres, in neighbourhoods and at the national level there is a sense of stasis. Some

people expect that things will improve but most say conditions in a range of areas have remained the same over the past year and they expect little to change in the near future. This is atypical for transformation countries and is in contrast with nine in ten supporting 'big change'. People see little change, expect little change but aspire to 'big change': it appears that not incremental change but a major shift is desired. People's aspirations and their expectations built on the realities of their current circumstances appear incongruous.

As for an anticipated direction of change, the notion that BiH citizens should take their fate into their own hands emerges powerfully. A small majority is ready to abandon ethnic politics. Small majorities also think that politicians should decide on ways forward and that the government, rather than individuals, is responsible to provide. In the relationship between variables an underlying logic emerges. Beyond univariate results, factor analysis shows that 'big change' and an end to ethnic politics are related. Respondents also say that corruption must end. At the same time it appears that whatever the direction of change, the injustices of the war need to be addressed. In this sense, reconciling the population with the outcomes of the war appears as part of any viable future scenario. Politics and politicians and not citizens' action are seen as the vehicle for the implementation of change. It is possible to argue that there is a contradiction between the notion that people take their fate in their own hands and the idea that control over change be left to the political world. It appears that most respondents understand intellectually that change is needed but are reluctant to abandon the 'delivery van' of the administrative-centralist socialist legacy. Nevertheless, factor analysis also demonstrates that there is latent *sui generis* energy in the direction-of-change variables, which policy makers may choose to release and channel.

Eight in ten respondents are not aware of current endeavours to change the constitution. However,

virtually all of those who are actually aware agree that such change is a good idea. Independent of awareness of the ongoing constitutional reform process, there is a high demand for change. Overwhelmingly, people want to change the political structures in BiH (in excess of seven in ten); half of the population rejects the current constitution (DPA) as ineffective. Unity presents itself as a multi-source theme in this survey: for example, the second policy priority after socio-economic concerns is to unify BiH. Most of those who are aware of current undertakings to change BiH's constitution spontaneously say they wish to unify the country or abolish the Entities. Overall, it is thus clear that a majority aspires to a new political structure for BiH.

Centralised political structures emerge as superior alternatives to current arrangements. Dividing the country, establishing three Entities or a Yugoslavia Mark II are virtually unacceptable and are not predicted as likely outcomes. Prima facie, it is thus purely a matter of deciding which centralised option attracts most support and least opposition; i.e. the least divisive outcome. The federal alternative (centralised state with strong regions) outpaces other models, prominently including the current status quo. On aggregated scores a centralised BiH with strong regions gathers most support and is opposed by hardly anyone (<3%). A federal BiH thus appears least likely to entrench any significant minority, though regression analysis shows that the sources of support for the federal model are in part determined by religious affiliation and identity. Nevertheless, the federal alternative also does well in terms of envisaged likelihood of outcome. In fact, very few respondents think it is unlikely to come about. Opponents to the federal option are no more likely to resort to violence than the rest of the sample. Affluent federal democracies are the country-models many respondents aspire to and most are familiar with

federalism from the Yugoslavia-era. However, the importance of religious affiliation and identity in regression analyses involving institutional, political and constitutional variables suggests that any changes to the political structure of BiH are potentially divisive. Especially people who have exclusive identities ('the 504') may well turn out to be a significant risk. They may be a small minority in the sample but, nevertheless, they could represent several hundred thousand adult BiH residents. This is particularly important since 'the 504' are twice as likely to resort to violence for political ends. Any endeavours to realise the majority's aspirations to change constitutional arrangements would have to take into account possible reactions from 'the 504'. It should also be remembered that respondents who have an exclusive identity are much less likely to aspire to EU membership than primary identifiers.

A strong future-orientation informs attitudes towards the international impact on BiH. Overall, it appears that international influence is accepted as a part of the BIH system of governance. After all, seven in ten respondents insist that BiH's future lies with the EU. There is also a strong demand for the EU to influence the future of BiH; significantly fewer choose the UN or the OHR. However, neither the EU nor other international organisations are seen to be responsible for realising people's short-term policy priorities.

Many respondents who mention a country-model for BiH choose either Switzerland or Germany. At the same time Germany (after Serbia) is not invited to be involved in BiH's future. Conversely, some say the US should be involved but America is not chosen as a country-model. Interesting is the absence of successful transition countries such as Poland, the Slovak or Czech Republics or Hungary from the list of country-models. Critically, the modal category (around 30%) says that BiH needs no model but should follow an endogenous path. This once more suggests the presence of *sui*

generis energy. At the same time the overwhelming commitment to a supra-national idea may indicate low confidence in domestic structures. Overall, there is a powerful belief that BiH's future is grounded in European integration. Respondents seem to look for a solution to structural problems by expressing their desire for BiH to join the EU. They seem to identify the EU as an effective vehicle for incorporating transitional societies into a family of relatively successful systems.

With the exception of the EU, respondents make virtually no distinctions between international organisations. They are generally mistrusted. However, while many respondents believe all international organisations are corrupt, neither the UN nor the OHR are singled out as particularly corrupt. At the same time, the UN does not necessarily emerge as an organisation with a distinct brand. Its trust and stay-or-go scores are very close to those of the OHR. The latter is widely known to be wound up in the near future. There is currently no comfortable majority in support of a continued UN-presence in BiH. In fact, a large minority would like to see the UN leave in the near future (four in ten). A similar proportion feels the UN mandate should end if and when BiH joins the European Union. At present, the UN is not necessarily seen as part of BiH's long-term future. The support for a continued UN presence is virtually independent of rational economic and policy-driven considerations but features strong effects from religious affiliation, Entity and identity. Correspondence analysis shows that 'UN-stay' is a theme which clusters with primary BiH identity, constitutional change, returnees and unification issues.

Nevertheless, for the moment there remains a popular mandate to remain by six in ten and respondents give the UN direction in its policy priorities: Human rights, an improvement in living standards and the fight against corruption are key. There is no clear explanation in the survey

for the prominence of human rights in UN-role assignments. At the quantitative level it appears that human rights are a surrogate for other issues. As for less important policy aims, not many respondents wish to see the UN involved in BiH politics at any level or in the education system, which overall they say works well. There is also little demand for the UN to help the weak to get a say. Net support for return and sustainable return is marginal. Neither returnees nor non-returnees articulate return policy as a top priority; they too opt for economic progress and anti-corruption policies. It is quite clear that continued support for returnees and the integration of non-returnees is unlikely to yield high returns on investment.

Four in ten respondents say they experienced forced migration. 25.4% of the total sample qualify as IDPs, 14.1% as refugees. More than six in ten displaced respondents have returned to their old neighbourhoods. Purely at the quantitative level, return has been a success, as a majority returned, partially reversing one of the effects of the war. There is only a minor effect from perceived standard of living on displacement and return status. Residence, age and employment have moderate effects. Income, life satisfaction, subjective health and education do not feature at all. This shows that neither returnees nor non-returnees are outside the economic mainstream. Returnees and non-returnees do not emerge as special-needs groups. There is also no evidence that they differ significantly from other sections of society or from majority opinion. Whenever displacement status has an effect on other variables it tends to be moderate or weak: displacement status does not emerge as a critical predictor for the outcome of interest in any dependent variable. Here lies another major achievement of return: displacement did not expel migrants from the mainstream.

Attitudes to people who suffered forced migration are supportive. There is a sense of compassion and

solidarity. Most people say that the legal basis for return should be preserved. They broadly support policies which assist returnees and to a lesser degree the integration of non-returnees. At the same time, people claim that assistance-delivery-systems are corrupt. Interestingly, attitudes do not differ much between displaced and non-displaced respondents. In principle, respondents agree with the continuation of return: morally, legally and operationally. However, support for returnees loses out when exposed to the competition of other possible UN-policy areas. Even the potential beneficiaries of such policies no longer prioritise them.

When it comes to the Diaspora, economic themes dominate. BiH citizens who once fled and are now making a living abroad are predominantly perceived as a potential economic asset to BiH. Respondents are clear that a returning Diaspora would have a positive impact on the country. The Diaspora is not outside a 'community of sufferers' and its long-term return is seen as natural. Still, for the moment and for economic reasons they should stay abroad but eventually return home.

Should the Diaspora return, respondents clearly see the socio-economic advantages such as capital investment, skills transfer and job-creation, though the idea of a positive cultural impact ('make BiH more civilised') is rejected. Return is not perceived as a threat to jobs or local businesses. At the same time, respondents are also clear that the integration of a returning Diaspora may provide both attitudinal and cultural challenges. Returning the Diaspora is not a short-term aim but surfaces as a long-term aspiration.

BiH emerges as a TV nation. There is significant trust in public service TV and only a very small minority cite media other than TV as trusted sources for news. Around one in ten turn to Croatian TV for news. Neither the Internet nor magazines play a role at all. TV thus powerfully presents itself as the right platform for primary releases. There are some important sectional differences though. Trust in

public service TV is greater among FBiH residents and Muslims. People who do not discuss political matters are less likely to read a paper. Respondents who have exclusive identities are more likely to read a paper on a weekly basis. For this reason, print may well be a valuable resource for secondary releases, especially for those which aim to penetrate a broader range of groups in BiH society.

The correspondence analysis provides a multi-dimensional view of key data, though it does not allow predictions from the sample to the population. Key findings include the identification of two cross-cutting dimensions: The first incorporates multiple ideas including optimism/pessimism, young/old and an economic dimension. The second represents a political dimension. In addition to cross-cutting dimensions, there are four principal clusters and 'Middle-Bosnia' [5]. 'The 504' feature as a minority far removed from 'Middle-Bosnia'. This illustrates the distance between the mainstream and people who have exclusive identities, and separatist and no-change agendas.

Returnees/non-returnees are somewhat outside of 'Middle-Bosnia' but not far removed. Whatever distance there is, it is more likely to be demographic and attitudinal rather than economic.

Section 2
Conclusions to the Focus Group Research

2.1 Overall Observations

The research team was to discover that groups in BiH differed in a number of ways from their experiences with focus groups in other societies. Overall, in BiH there was more discipline and less lively discussion. On a range of issues, moderators

5. This is not a geographical reference but intended to convey the middle of BiH society strictly socio-economically and attitudinally. Comparable terms may include 'Middle-England' or 'Middle-America'

encountered fewer problems with controlling fervent contributions than with stimulating debate. Some topics received few coherent responses while other issues evoked some interesting dialogues and a great deal of analysable material. Groups containing young people were especially different in the sense that the passion which often prevails in youth groups in other Central and Eastern European settings was largely absent. In particular, questions about politics delivered few new insights, as young people seemed generally uninterested.

In this context it should not be forgotten that the original idea for researching migrants in BiH dates back a few years. In the meantime the world has changed around the research and in many groups there was the underlying belief that this enquiry was late. In some cases discussants said so quite openly. At the same time, the focus group discussions offer insights into the outcomes of past policy implementation and provide a number of pointers for future interventions. Most of all, they give direct advice to future policy design and provide policy-makers with the chance to fine tune their current priorities according to what recipients say is important to them.

As outlined above, when this research commenced, it was anticipated that major differences would emerge between males and females, minority and majority returnees and that there would be important variations across geographical locations. In the event, the major differences were return status and age.

2.2 Returnees and Non-Returnees

The first major difference between returnees and non-returnees lies in the motivations for return or staying in the host community. Returnees base their decision on emotive factors like nostalgia and 'going home' while non-returnees appear more self-directed and are guided by rational considerations such as income, opportunities and education. Not all the decisions to return

are entirely voluntary; some discussants say that eviction and a lack of funds left them with no alternative but return. Others sought to lose the stigma of being a displaced person in return. It is also the case that the duration of displacement is related to the decision to stay. An interesting finding is that the lure of potential assistance played no significant part in the decision to return; most people were simply not aware of help. On the whole, discussants do not make a distinction between push and pull factors and the gains and losses of return or staying.

While integration did not present itself as a problem for either group the way it was accomplished discriminated between returnees and non-returnees. In short, the non-returnees appear to have solved one central problem of all displaced persons that of integrating into, and being accepted by, the host community. Some say that they were actually accepted in the host community from the early stages of displacement.

Many returnees - especially older cohorts - on the other hand, attempt to reclaim the lives they once had, and the failure to do so is a cause of disappointment. At the same time the economic preconditions and especially the lack of work opportunities inhibit the search for a durable solution. This suggests that a significant number of returnees are finding it difficult to abandon whatever certainties they found in their previous arrangements until such time that the uncertainties of the present and the foreseeable future are confronted.

An important finding from this research is that group return is more successful than individual return. This is so because it maximises the chances of more or less immediate reintegration since it implies that a level of cohesion already exists in the returning group. Indeed the wish to return is often arrived at after group discussion and mutual support in the decision to return.
The overall picture is one in which returnees acknowledge that they received adequate

assistance to restart their lives, however, the conditions necessary to achieve an acceptable livelihood have yet to materialise. They expect continued support particularly in securing employment and/or help by way of capital equipment, which would enable them to earn a living. Discussants from rural areas seek assistance in the form of farm machinery, livestock and the creation of markets for their output. Whilst generally happy with the quantity of assistance they received returnees are critical of the inequity they perceived in its distribution and the quality of the materials and workmanship. Many hold local authorities responsible for the unfair and corrupt administration of assistance. International organisations however, are not associated with corruption. Inequity in the distribution of assistance not only challenges conceptions of social justice but, in addition, atomises recipients and undermines cohesion in the community. There was also some dissatisfaction with the delays in the assistance process but these did not appear critical to outcomes.

In fact, delays also illustrate that some discussants would wait for months if not years for institutional assistance rather than solve pressing problems with their own initiative. External support appears to create or continue dependency on institutional assistance. It appears that institutional support for returnees presents itself as a post-script to the provider mentality; a hallmark of the administrative-centralist days of Yugoslavia. Dependency was a consistent underlying theme in returnee groups, and on a few occasions dependency and the resultant lack of motivation were openly discussed.

Non-returnees appear more self-reliant and self-directed than returnees. With the exception of food parcels, they neither asked for nor received assistance and have little history of external support. They would welcome assistance in training and retraining and are more likely to support initiatives which would enhance their labour market participation. In other words, non-returnees would prefer an enhancement of their marketable skills to capital equipment and the creation of markets for produce.

There are no reports of active or systematic obstruction to return and this can be clearly seen as one important aspect of the successful implementation of the return process in BiH, and, at this level, a beneficial outcome of the Dayton Peace Accord.

2.3 Common Focus on Employment and the Young

Although major differences exist between returnees and non-returnees, they share a common view that there is an acute need for creating employment opportunities. This concern was raised by groups across the country; young and old, men and women, returnees and non-returnees. Having a job is not simply a desirable end in itself, but is also a necessary precondition for the realisation of core aspirations in other areas of life. In addition, employment is central to the success of the return process. Sustainable return and integration appeared virtually synonymous with paid work. Infrastructural improvements and public services matter less. The research thus provides support for a redirection of policy-making from the area of return to measures, which secure livelihoods irrespective of displacement status.

There is support in all age groups for investment in young people. There is a popular perception that the future of BiH lies in the young. Despite the relative disengagement amongst younger discussants, many are aware of their potential but feel constrained. They believe that older generations, the media and other societal structures stand as obstacles in their development and involvement in society. In a way, they have difficulty in recognising themselves in BiH society

and feel unable to make a greater contribution to the country until their core concerns have been addressed. At the same time, as a critical finding of this research, they look to institutional initiatives to provide solutions to their problems.

One major challenge to future policy-making is mobilising young people. Although there are clear signs that they want to be included, they lack the knowledge, and perhaps the initiative to achieve this. The channels of self-realisation remain obscure. Many seek support in developing skills and knowledge particularly in vocational areas. Some claim that they lack the funds to further their educational qualifications. Leaving aside the debate over the merits of the Bologna-reforms, generally, they are content with current standards of education, but simply say that they have a financial problem with access. Some are very clear that educational opportunities abroad could make an important difference to their lives.

Young people are more likely to seek support for new business start-ups, older generations favour development of more communal structures e.g. re-opening factories, and re-starting agricultural cooperatives in rural areas. Broadly speaking, younger participants were more likely to ask for assistance with self-employment; older cohorts sought secure employment.

In terms of questions related to displacement and return, politics and constitutional reform, young people either tend to reflect the opinions of their parents or base their opinions on ascribed aspects of their lives such as their religion. However, when responding to questions, which directly affect them like jobs, education and money, they differ significantly from the older discussants in their views and there is little doubt that there are important differences between generations. In contrast with older cohorts, young discussants were the only ones who point out that BiH is a

transition country rather than just a post-conflict society. This is a critical finding and suggests that younger cohorts are likely to be more open to policies which aim to catalyse transformation. At the same time they are the only group who also feel excluded.

The political world is not perceived as effective in solving the problems of young people. Attitudes to politics are predominantly under-informed and embryonic. Only a few discussants see recent improvements. Low trust and low efficacy are the hallmarks of the relationship between young citizens and the BiH system of governance.

2.4 Policy Considerations – UN

Generally, international organisations including the UN and NGOs are seen as responsible for contributions to progress in BiH and there is support for the continuation of their work.

At the same time, there is a general lack of information on the mandate, current policies and achievements of the UN in BiH. People do not necessarily associate the UN with development activity. There is a disconnection between the UN and the people they actually support. Only very few mention the UN's contributions to peace-keeping, humanitarian aid and the work associated with the UNHCR. A few mention the UNDP but only have a vague idea of its activities; mentioning its support of large projects e.g. dairies.

There are five key areas where the UN can help or improve:

- Job creation
- Provision of capital equipment such as livestock and machinery especially in rural areas
- Support in developing markets and channels
- Greater transparency and accountability in its dealings

- Improvements in public relations and communication

Young people encourage future-oriented entrepreneurial models and seek improvements in their marketable skills. Older discussants look to more past-oriented collective structures.

More public awareness of the organisational structure and policies of the UN and its affiliates emerges as a key remedy. Many of the younger participants feel that the UN could raise public awareness of its activities through the media, particularly television. Some think that communication would be improved if the UN abandoned administrative concepts (e.g. 'sustainable return', 'sustainable integration') in favour of everyday language. The UN is advised to make their efforts more transparent by documenting and publicising the results of their programmes.

In all groups corruption was one of the favourite topics and people shared stories of corruption. In the end, however, there are relatively few concrete examples of personal encounters with corruption and a tendency to relay second-hand accounts. There are very few suggestions that the UN itself is corrupt.

2.5 Advice – Head of UN

Much of the advice given to the UN as an organisation is reflected in the advice to Ms McNab the UN's Resident Representative in BiH. She is perceived as a figure of authority, who has the ability to make things happen. This is in contrast to perceptions about local officials who are considered corrupt in their dealings. In a way, the Head of the UN is assigned a 'watchdog' role to curb the improper spending of funds.

However, in many ways advice is more specific. There is a feeling that the Head of the UN is removed from everyday life because of her role. Many advise her to make direct contact with local people which would enable her to appreciate their immediate concerns. She is ascribed a role in facilitating policies on employment and influencing decision-making to this end. She is also accorded a role in skills enhancement and providing resources to propel new business initiatives. This is voiced especially by younger discussants.

It is felt that if the Head of the UN encouraged more transparency in spending, then perceptions of corruption in its distribution through local channels would be diminished. She is perceived as a guardian against corruption amongst local officials.

All in all, discussants encourage the Head of the UN to be more visible in her dealings and inform people about the actual mandate and policies of the UN and its affiliate organisations. Discussants seemed eager to receive more information, and for this reason asked for greater transparency. Beyond direct contact with recipients, TV is mentioned as an effective platform for public relations initiatives.

2.6 Advice – Minister for Human Rights and Refugees

Advice to the Minister of the MHRR was the last theme in the discussion guide and discussants were notably less forthcoming. Most of the advice they had was already given to the Head of the UN. In addition, critical attitudes to the political world may have contaminated policy advice to the Minister. Critical comments include the idea that the MHRR be wound up, not least of all to signal closure to return policies. Also, discussants remind the Minister of political promises, which they now wish to see realised. Comments on the Minister and the MHRR may not be accurate representations but transfigured ideas about the perceived shortcomings of the BiH system of governance.

However, there are some similarities in the advice given to both officials. Most importantly direct contact and measures to combat unemployment are common advice areas. The fact that many discussants repeatedly invite officials to visit may suggest a perceived remoteness of public figures. Consequently, discussants encourage the Minister to circumvent Municipalities in his dealings, and establish direct relationships with the local level. Where the Minister visits, e.g. in Kotorsko, positive attitudes emerge.

One distinct role assigned to the Minister is in the area of equal rights. Neither the UN nor the Head of UN were in any significant way identified with this assignment. The Minister however, is seen as someone who can safeguard equality.

Section 3
Interface Between Qualitative and Quantitative Research Instruments

A questionnaire survey differs fundamentally from focus groups in the methodologies it uses and the information it provides. A quantitative survey, which is based on a random selection of respondents, represents the population from which the sample was drawn within known margins of error. On the other hand, discussants in focus groups represent little more than themselves. In fact, another 20 groups could have delivered different outcomes. However, focus groups are indispensable for drilling down in particular thematic areas. They are also very useful as group dynamics can surface themes and ideas, sometimes through intense discussion, which other research instruments cannot deliver in quite the same way.

The research at hand has the relative certainty of a large and representative sample. However, some aspects in the analysis of the quantitative data remain ambiguous. In some cases, qualitative data can provide further insights and contextualisation.

In addition, where findings in the quantitative survey are broadly confirmed by the discussants in the focus groups, greater analytical weight is added.

- The responses to the quantitative survey make clear that displaced people deserve assistance, that the post-war agreements, which are the legal base for return, should remain and that displaced people should be able to return wherever they choose. Furthermore, respondents agree that displaced people are worse off than others, even if they have received assistance. At the same time, respondents claim that the assistance-delivery system is corrupt. Overall, there is strong agreement that the return process was 'right'. In all of these points, the focus groups echoed the quantitative data

- Returnees and non-returnees in the focus groups, and both displaced and non-displaced respondents to the survey questionnaire are asking to solve the issue of unemployment. It therefore follows that strategies for reducing unemployment are universal and not restricted to displaced people. In both instruments there appears to be the belief that unemployment is essentially a structural problem, which requires state intervention before individual initiatives can be successful

- Continued support especially designed to assist returnees was not a policy priority in either instrument. In the quantitative survey, the UN was advised to assist with human rights, improve living standards and fight corruption. While human rights did not really feature, the focus groups talked extensively about economic progress and an end to corruption. It appears that a continuation of return policies has reached the point of diminishing returns. Even the people who could benefit from continuation of such policies no longer prioritise them

- In both instruments it is clear that return in itself was a success. The quantitative survey shows that a majority of displaced persons was able to return

to their old homes and neighbourhoods. In terms of policy interventions which assisted returnees, discussants in the focus groups say that they were helped. While there are concerns about the equity of assistance distribution, corruption and the quality of some of the materials and services, discussants do say that the overall quantity of the assistance met their expectations. In sum, both instruments appear to confirm that return policies were essentially right and fundamentally a success

- Neither research instrument provides any evidence that displaced people are excluded from mainstream society and economy. In fact, here lies another major achievement of return policies: return did not expel migrants from the mainstream economy and society. The young however, say they feel excluded in a number of ways

- Young people emerge as a key consideration in both instruments. In the quantitative survey young people are described as the key strength of BiH, in the focus groups discussants of all ages stress that investment in the young generation is critical for the revival of BiH. At the same time the quantitative survey shows that people between 18 and 30 are least likely to take an interest in politics, many other measures suggest that most young people are outside of the political process. Politics does not emerge as something which young people identify as a vehicle for realising their ideas. The focus groups powerfully underline this, as young discussants appear challenged by serious discussions about political matters. They say that an intergenerational conflict, the administration and the media inhibit their contributions to BiH society. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the quantitative survey shows that around two thirds of the under-30s would like to leave BiH. From both instruments it emerges that the young people of BiH have a low commitment to their country. Their ability to make a meaningful difference to society remains restricted. Perhaps as a result, young people would rather rely on external motivational triggers than use their initiative to change things

- Education is not seen as a problem in either instrument. The survey shows that it is not an important policy aim and the focus groups clarify that access to education is a problem where young people do not have sufficient funds

- In both the survey and in the groups, there is strong belief that the state, the government or institutions are responsible for solving people's problems. Rarely do people look for solutions within themselves. This belief in 'Big Government' appears as a post-script to the provider mentality of socialist Yugoslavia

- In the quantitative survey the role of the UN appears ambiguous. The modal category wants the UN to deal with human rights, an issue which does not appear to be a problem. In the groups, neither the UN nor its Head are given the role of the guardian over rights. That role is reserved for the MHRR Minister. Many discussants appear confused about the UN, its mandate and its policies. There seems to be a lack of accurate information which may well have contaminated trust scores. From the few comments about the UN's role in the focus groups it emerges that UN activity is associated with the humanitarian interventions during and immediately after the war. This association may well be the source of human rights role assignments for the UN. In any case, there may be a risk in basing policy initiatives on manifestations which require further clarification

- The relatively low esteem expressed for the Minister of the MHRR in the focus groups may be a reflection on a wider notion of mistrust directed at the over-arching political structures and especially at the State government in Sarajevo: less than one quarter trust the State government. Therefore, comments on the Minister may not be accurate representations of the facts but may well suffer from response contamination

- Corruption appears as over-estimated in both the qualitative and the quantitative surveys. Discussants in the focus groups cherish an opportunity to talk about corruption, yet their contributions remain at the descriptive level and are mostly second-hand. In the quantitative survey there is a large gap between beliefs in corruption and actual recent experiences. In terms of identifying the levels where corruption takes place, discussants in the focus groups are altogether more specific in identifying corrupt processes and people, than were respondents in the questionnaire survey. In the latter corruption is perceived as virtually ubiquitous. In the focus groups corruption was overwhelmingly attributed to local intermediaries and IOs were broadly exempt. This finding provides a clue to solving the apparent contradiction in the quantitative report since it suggests that IOs, the providers of assistance in the first instance, are implicated by association with intermediaries. This is consistent with a finding in the survey that the UN is yet to distinguish itself from other organisations and actors

- Finally, the survey asks in which areas respondents experienced corruption in the past twelve months. Overall there are few responses. However, the modal category mentions corruption in the health service. This is consistent with the findings from the focus groups where discussants mention that they have to pay when accessing health services although they are furnished with health cards

Section 4
Lessons Learned

In particular the qualitative research yields a number of lessons which may be helpful in planning and implementing similar interventions. There is no attempt to underestimate the specificity of the situation in BiH [6].

6 However, the authors are familiar with a similar intervention where UNHCR returned mostly Kurdish migrants to areas in what is now known as the Iraqi Kurdistan Region
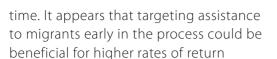
Lessons learned have little meaning unless they include ideas about improving things; some therefore feature in policy advice.

- Any intervention which aims to assist migrants should be based on timely fact-based research. This makes implementation more efficient and channels the right assistance to the right people. If an application of random methods is not possible, snow-balling [7] may serve as an appropriate system to recruit respondents within migrant communities

- Research should also accompany any longer-term intervention to monitor and precisely identify the point at which diminishing returns on investment set in. In addition, research can identify key messages which are likely to be of value to the return process and which potential recipients decode in a uniform manner

- Early interventions need to have durable solutions as their finite aim. Beyond policies which restart lives through reconstruction and capital equipment, sustainability is key. Sustainability of return/integration and paid work are virtually congruous and are a precondition for making return and integration a lasting success

- In addition to paid work, capital equipment such as machinery, tools and livestock are of limited value unless there are channels for marketing the produce. It appears pertinent to explore opportunities for marketing and distribution before furnishing recipients with capital equipment

- Timing is important. The focus groups clearly show that the desire to return decreases with

7 Snow-balling is a method where one respondent (seed) gives the contact names of a maximum of four other people he/she knows who fulfil the selection criteria. The four contacts provide another four names and so on

time. It appears that targeting assistance to migrants early in the process could be beneficial for higher rates of return

- Many young people feel left out. This should be given special consideration in the design of return policies

- Communication appears as mission-critical. The communication of the availability of assistance to potential returnees early in the process can be an important trigger for return

- Also, policy implementation requires efficient communication in order to help recipients understand the goals and overall coherence of the mission. In addition, communicating achievements reduces remoteness of funding institutions and helps with both brand building and brand fit

- There is confusion about terminology. It appears that the use of everyday language instead of administrative concepts is advantageous

- Remoteness is a problem in the relationship between funders and recipients. Senior figures in funding agencies should meet with recipients at regular intervals. Direct communication can help reduce remoteness and be of mutual benefit. The use of the media, especially TV, can proliferate key messages and communicate how funds are being spent and who is receiving them

- Intermediaries are seen as a problem and their involvement should be kept to a minimum. Greater reliance on direct intervention could help prevent the contamination of brand images by perceptions of corruption and inequity in assistance distribution. Where intermediaries are indispensable, their actions require close monitoring. In fact, if local people understand how much is being spent, they would be able to complement monitoring with their own observations

- There appears to be a problem with decision-making. Discussants in the focus groups claim that decisions made by local officials were not always beneficial. A limitation of the discretion of local officials could be appropriate

- The lack of quality of assistance, mainly in construction materials and standards of workmanship, is perceived to be problematic. Funder quality control should be an integral part of any intervention

- There are economies of scale in group-return. It appears that the encouragement of group dynamics in return as well as group-based assistance could support more efficient policy implementation

- Perceived inequity in the distribution of assistance can violate conceptions of social justice and challenges community solidarity. The allocation of assistance in similar cases could benefit from closer monitoring

- Education plays an important role in the decision to return. Consequently, early improvements to education and long-term access, especially to vocational and tertiary education, are key

- Integration in host communities emerges as a viable alternative to return. While the decision to return is ultimately made by the displaced, it may be equally beneficial to dedicate significant assistance to the integration of non-returnees. This is especially important in areas where natural internal migration includes elements of urbanisation

- Institutional assistance can lead to dependency. This is especially true in post-socialist countries. Policy implementation should insist that institutional assistance is matched with individual effort

Section 5
Policy Advice

This survey provides a range of pointers for future policy design. Actionable policy advice focuses on recommendations which, from the perspective of the data, appear realisable. On the basis of the findings this Section maps out broader development areas. Once actual policy priorities have been identified, further data analysis can yield important insights. In particular, the segmentation of data in order to identify sub-populations and target groups will be supported by the relatively large sample size.

The survey maps out two key long-term aspirations of the BiH population:

1. Joining the EU and inviting the EU to help shape the future of BiH
2. Constitutional change and a new political structure

The research also shows quite clearly that before long-term aspirations can be realised, short- and mid-term policies are needed to prepare the ground. Not least of all, the potential risks associated with constitutional changes require particular attention.

The research team identified four short to mid-term development areas

1. Economic progress, employment opportunities and SMEs [8]
2. A comprehensive package for the young
3. Reconciliation and social integration
4. Communication, trust, fighting corruption and civic engagement

The advice below is cross-cutting as elements of it are likely to be of value in a range of areas. Media initiatives and further research play roles in most of them.

8 Small and medium-sized enterprises

1 Economic progress, employment opportunities and SMEs

The study shows that economic concerns dominate. Given the importance of these issues, it appears unlikely that progress can be made in BiH unless there is economic development and more employment. Moreover, it is quite possible that the observed sectional divisions would lose some of their saliency if economic concerns were reduced. Critically however, continued or new dependencies on institutional assistance need to be avoided.

Overall economic development and national interventions which stimulate an increase in employment go beyond the scope of this study and will require macro-economic initiatives. However, there are three policy ideas which emerge directly from the study:

1.1 Employment – New business initiatives

Employment opportunities should not be coterminous with paid work. In particular, young people in the focus groups asked for assistance in setting up businesses; training, easier access to credit, and grants for small businesses. In the literature, the critical importance of SMEs for economic transition is well documented [9]. LEDU in Northern Ireland may serve as an example of how government-led well-funded SME development can assist both the reduction of sectional division and overall economic progress [10]. The following ideas may help support policy design:

9 Cf. e.g. Working Paper No 30 by Nicholas Stern, Chief Economist at the EBRD, *The Future of Economic Transition*, July 1998. Also cf. Smallbone, D. and Welter, F.; *Institutional Development and Entrepreneurship in Transition Economies*; Belfast, June 2003

10 http://www.startingabusinessinireland.com/dirledu.htm

- Conduct a research programme to explore viable initiatives in other societies. This may prominently include other transition economies and Ireland both North and South. Apart from the fact that Northern Ireland is noted for its successes in leveraging SME-activity in reducing sectional divisions, the Republic of Ireland has experienced recent rapid economic growth which was significantly supported by SMEs

- Conduct a research programme to evaluate the current conditions in BiH for SME and co-operative start up. This could include the legal framework, registration procedures, taxation, domestic markets and export potential. On the basis of this research the various political institutions of BiH could be advised

- Engage in dialogue with government. BiH government agencies may decide to provide tax breaks and simplified procedures for registering and starting businesses. In addition, the government of BiH may decide to enhance its capacity in state-support for companies such as the creation of a dedicated Ministry or an expansion in the capacity of the Chambers of Commerce

- Engage in dialogue with banks in order to build partnerships in support of SME start-ups

- All support requires some form of reciprocity, set targets or shared-risk schemes. For example, a grant to start a marketing co-operative can only be awarded if the funder receives shares in the profits. This way additional resources for supporting other initiatives can be mobilised and losses from bad loans could partly be recovered. Alternatively, funders could agree fixed turnover or profit targets with the recipients. Loans should be paid out on the basis of shared risk

- Broadcast TV programmes in support of SME and co-operative start-ups. BiH emerges as a TV nation. It

thus appears appropriate to utilise TV as a platform for stimulating greater entrepreneurial spirit and a more developed sense of competition. In particular, non-fictional formats could award prizes for best business idea. This could be combined with viewer call-ins and support from banks which award loans and start-up capital to the winners

- Provide local training in business start-ups. This could include seminars to highlight the personal qualities needed to be in business. This would encourage suitable candidates and discourage those who prefer working in employment. Additional curricula could include marketing, accountancy, banking, legal matters, personnel and the compilation of viable business plans. It may be possible to invite experienced business people to visit local areas to hold workshops in order to educate interested parties about life in business

- Develop a system for business angels. Business angels help young companies and co-operatives to succeed and grow. Policy-makers may consider requesting experienced (or retired) business people to accompany start-up businesses in their critical phases of growth. In return, business angels could receive a shareholding and/or a non-executive directorship to make their assistance lucrative

- Guarantee bank loans. Rather than providing direct loans, funders may decide to guarantee bank loans in support of SME start-ups. This way, funders would place the responsibility for evaluating the viability of applicants' business plans on qualified banking experts. In addition, risk could be shared between funders and banks

1.2 Local co-operatives to market and distribute produce

In the focus groups it became apparent that economic development prominently includes the creation of markets and distribution systems for

agricultural produce and other products. Continued investment in capital equipment for rural dwellers, such as machinery and livestock, is unlikely to be profitable unless the channels for effective marketisation are established. It also emerged that there are the embryonic foundations of greater levels of social organisation in support of improved livelihoods. Co-operative initiatives could be leveraged in order to increase economic activity at the local level and provide an opportunity for local people to help themselves.

The research team suggests the following:

- Further explore the potential for marketing and distribution channels. In order to make assistance in capital equipment viable, channels require immediate attention. Moreover, it is unlikely that economic activity can be successful and reliance on imports can be reduced unless domestic channels in BiH are further developed

- Commission an expertise which outlines the current situation and makes recommendations regarding an expansion and extension of channel activity. In addition, training for local producers may help them use existing or new channels efficiently

- Stimulate greater collective economic action by local producers

- Select a limited number of locations where pilot projects for co-operative marketing are likely to succeed. The marketisation and distribution of agricultural produce by local co-operatives, e.g. collectively producing, distributing and selling food products in nearby commercial hubs, may provide the scope for a viable start

- Explore branding as part of a localisation strategy. For example Vlasic cheese is widely recognised for its taste. Its marketing potential is therefore increased. Co-operative producers in other areas of BiH could

be educated in identifying strengths in their products and be guided in marketing them accordingly.

1.3 Returning the Diaspora

In the context of policy advice, the return of the Diaspora is essentially treated as an economic theme. The research team follows the respondents to the quantitative survey who highlight the economic dimension of Diaspora return.

The OHR estimates that there are currently 1.3 million BiH citizens who live and work abroad [11]. While dedicated research is required to profile the Diaspora both demographically and economically, its return could have a multiplier effect on economic activity in BiH. It is envisaged that a returning Diaspora would bring capital, expertise and energy. In the short-term, they are the most likely source of inward investment, especially at grass-root level.

Before a policy initiative should commence the following may need to be considered:

A research programme which:

- Systematically targets BiH citizens who have already returned from abroad and have started their own businesses. These respondents could be important for an examination of the opportunities and obstacles they experienced. Their accounts would also be critical for the design of instruments in subsequent research components

- Locates concentrations of the BiH Diaspora. Countries which may be included are Canada, Sweden, Germany, Austria and the United States

- Snow-balling [12] may be an appropriate method for recruiting respondents to the survey

11 OHR Press Release 13 April 2007
12. Snow-balling is a method where one respondent (seed) gives the contact names of a maximum of four other people he/she knows who fulfil the selection criteria. The four contacts provide another four names and so on

- Alternatively, members of the Diaspora who are visiting BiH on vacation could be intercepted at border-crossings and airport arrivals and be invited to participate in interviews

- Estimates the ability of members of the Diaspora to invest in BiH and segments the data for lucrative targets

- Profiles push and pull factors

- Suggests ways to convince members of the Diaspora to return to BiH

- Establishes areas where groups of returnees can settle and support each other

- Explores BiH government for its ability to implement pro-return policies. This could be achieved through a legal and economic analysis and in-depth interviews with decision-makers

- Suggests a suitable timeframe for the implementation of policy

In addition to thorough research the following may be integral part of any policy design:

- A tax regime which favours returnees

- Public investment to complement direct investment by the returning Diaspora

- Simplified laws of incorporation

- Government coaches to help the returning Diaspora to integrate and invest profitably. Such coaches could be recruited from persons with a Diaspora background

- A government institution such as a dedicated Ministry to attract, guide and support returning Diaspora

- Assurances that returning Diaspora will not lose their residency status in host countries if they return to BiH

2 Provide a comprehensive package for the young

One key finding of the research is the near universal desire to invest in the young. The young are perceived as the greatest strength of BiH. At the same time the mobilisation of young people emerges as a key challenge. In fact, the overwhelming desire for selective out-migration by the young indicates that it is paramount to create conditions in BiH which are likely to convince its young citizens to remain in the country. However, in the study young people appear to require external stimuli as they are not confident to initiate change under their own aegis. It therefore follows to propose a dedicated research programme which helps identify the parameters of non-engagement and ways for building confidence and realising potential. Specifically, research which explains the obstacles and opportunities which confront young cohorts in contemporary BiH is likely to pinpoint measures which may help young people to apply their energy constructively.

2.1 Business initiatives for the young

In addition to ideas developed for stimulating greater entrepreneurship among the general public, this research identifies a number of pointers which could benefit younger cohorts. Young participants in discussion groups suggest individual, future-oriented entrepreneurial models to solve some of their economic problems. This strongly suggests that new businesses are most likely to succeed if younger cohorts are given privileged access to the resources which help build SMEs. At the same time, both research instruments show that while young people are aware of their potential and ability to change things, they often lack the triggers that lead to concrete action. Most of the policy ideas outlined above are likely to be of importance for young business start-ups.

- Educate young people about the importance of self-employment. The research team advises policy-makers to explore the possibility of targeting schools and tertiary education establishments with experienced figures from commerce as well as young successful entrepreneurs. In addition, an outline of the abilities and skills necessary for career in business could be discussed to help young people to gauge if they are likely to succeed. In addition, seminars for discussing concrete business ideas may complement this intervention.

2.2 Enhancements to marketable skills

In the focus groups, young participants were keen to discuss measures which are likely to enhance their ability to participate in the labour market. It appears that in addition to education, there is a need to provide more occupational training and to increase the overall professional competence of young BiH citizens.

- The research team suggests expanding current endeavours of placing young people in industry for a limited period of time. This way, young people can learn skills which are likely to increase their employment potential. For companies such placements are a good opportunity for optimising their recruitment strategy. At the same time, seminars run by representatives of different industrial sectors could introduce young people to the required skills. This measure could complement industrial placements and establish direct contact between job-seekers and hiring companies

- There appears to be a demand for skill transfer guided by professional trainers. To this end the research team suggests an expansion of certified vocational courses. Such courses could initially be run by experienced trainers from EU-countries and be translated by local staff

2.3 Grants and loans to meet the auxiliary cost of education

Young discussants in the focus groups insist that access to tertiary and vocational training can be challenging because of the auxiliary cost such as subsistence, travel and materials.

- To this end it appears appropriate to support young people with grants and loans. However, it appears equally appropriate to make grants conditional on the completion of the course and above-average achievement

2.4 Education abroad

Education abroad is often sought by young people in the focus groups. While it is not clear that exchange programmes will work in all instances, it may well be the case that placing young BiH citizens in education programmes abroad is a viable alternative. The ILO centre in Turin, Italy may serve as an illustration.

- The research team suggests placing BiH students in other European universities and colleges for a period of one academic year

- Vocational training courses abroad could be operated in much the same way as academic placements

2.5 More room for the young in the media

Young people in focus groups say they feel under-represented in the media. Their specific concerns tend not to be addressed.

- It may prove mutually beneficial to invite BiH media editors and representatives of youth organisations to a conference which would enhance awareness of youth-specific themes and help editors to market their output to younger cohorts in a more efficient manner

2.6 Support for collective youth action at local level including political activity

Both the survey and the focus groups show that young people are largely outside of the political process. Young people especially have difficulty in identifying politics as a vehicle for realising their aspirations. Many of their political ideas are spontaneous and emotive rather than based on facts. At the same time the organisation of youth-interests appears under-developed. It is not inconceivable that greater social organisation of young people may stimulate their initiative and help them voice their concerns more effectively. Initially however, it appears that young cohorts would benefit from seminars in civic engagement.

- Recruit and train facilitators who visit local youth centres in order to stimulate and organise youth activity

- Run seminars in civic engagement. Such seminars could explain the political structure and actors of BiH, introduce participants to constitutional reform issues and discuss ways for young people to realise their aspirations through an involvement in the political process

- Explore the possibility of networking youth centres and similar organisations in order to provide an institutional framework for motivating the young. In addition, such endeavours may help proliferate activity and be an important contribution to both networking and social cohesion among the young

3 Reconciliation and social integration

Given the low level of social trust and sectional divisions between different religious affiliates and identities, efforts should be directed at improving social cohesion. In addition, respondents to the quantitative survey are clear that addressing the injustices of the war is an integral component in any change scenario. At the same time the data demonstrate that a continued prosecution of war criminals is very unlikely to address perceived injustices.

3.1 Reconciliation Commission

Measures which aim to reduce social divisions are likely to be beneficial for overall social cohesion in BiH. Social progress appears challenged unless sectional divisions are reduced.

- To this end, the research team recommends to explore the possibility of formally establishing a Reconciliation Commission. The South African Promotion of National Unity and Reconciliation Act, 1995 may serve as a possible source of inspiration

- Any efforts in reconciliation should ensure that the concerns of people who have an exclusive identity are sufficiently addressed

3.2 Research and integration of exclusive identifiers

People who have an exclusive identity ('the 504') emerge as a key challenge to civic incorporation. It appears unlikely that BiH society as a whole can move forward if this involves the risk of further alienating this minority. Integration policies are unlikely to thrive unless the grievances of this group are fully understood and appropriately addressed. It is thus critical to find ways of narrowing the gap between 'the 504' and the BiH mainstream. This prominently includes an understanding for the objective and attitudinal differences between exclusive identifiers and the mainstream, but also where common ground exists.

- 'The 504' need further dedicated data analysis of the existing material as well as further research. The analysis of the existing data requires a systematic comparison between respondents who have an exclusive identity and other categories. An initial analytical task could be to profile 'the 504' more accurately along demographic, socio-economic and residential lines. Such an analysis could explore both differences between 'the 504' and the mainstream as well as areas of agreement as potential starting points for policy designs. In addition, a dedicated cross-sectional comparative analysis of general attitudes, trust scores and political variables may deliver important pointers for an integration policy and assess the potential risk which this group poses to constitutional change and the idea of BiH's EU membership.

- Respondents who have an exclusive identity tend to be more trusting towards the police. Any policy, which is likely to have a significant effect on the way the police delivers law enforcement, is likely to be met with scepticism

- Respondents who have an exclusive identity are also less likely to perceive the EU as a long-term aspiration. It therefore follows to suggest that 'the 504' need to experience the advantages of the EU. Young people from families where exclusive identities dominate could be given an opportunity to visit EU-countries for an extended period of time

4 Communication, Trust, Fighting Corruption and Civic Engagement

In both the survey and the focus groups respondents do not appear to have accurate information in a range of areas. This is especially true for the work of international organisations, corruption and politics. Interest in politics is low. On this basis it is unlikely that voters have fully internalised the intricacies of BiH politics and the scope for civic involvement in political processes. Overall, there appears to be a chasm between objective circumstances and their subjective reproduction by the population.

4.1 TV and print as platforms for civic education

The data show that there is a pressing need to fight perceptions of corruption and build trust in institutions. The fight against beliefs in corruption appears as salient in fighting corruption in itself. This fight could have significant side-effects such as improving the low esteem for BiH as a country and low political interest, as well as developing greater trust in political institutions and international organisations. The following may be of value:

- TV programmes which compare popular beliefs with facts in order to point out any inconsistencies. Survey research results may be a good source for outlining widespread beliefs such as the ones regarding the extent and pervasiveness of corruption. Similarly, widespread popular negativity about the situation in BiH could be adjusted to more realistic levels by presenting the corresponding facts

- Media texts which explain the functions of institutions and add transparency to spending practices

- Further development of investigative journalism which targets corrupt processes

- Across most of Europe the dissemination of survey results is an established method of public information. Broadcasting research findings can be an important contributor to the formation of fact-based opinions. In particular, an understanding of majority opinion could provide the goal-posts for viewers to gauge their own position

- Political participation requires encouragement. There should be an opportunity for the people of BiH to explore the intricacies of important issues through deliberation. Overall, there appears to be

- a need to go beyond predominantly plebiscitary modes to some level of participative input. In order to strengthen citizen's voices in governance, the research team suggests the following:

- Deliberative democracy as an idea to support local-level interventions: *'deliberation is an approach to decision-making that involves an informed public, thinking critically together and discussing options from multiple points of view. It encourages enlarged perspectives, opinions, and understandings and can result in better decisions and policies'*[13]. To this end the research team suggests that policy-makers explore the possibility of recruiting and training Facilitators who target particular local areas, secure venues, invite

citizens and moderate discussions on issues of concern. Such issues may well include constitutional ones

- Use TV to broaden the impact. Some local discussions could be recorded and broadcast on TV in order to broaden the reach of the measure and stimulate debate at the national level. Alternatively, a new TV format could present live debates and lead to subsequent local debates on similar topics

- Feed outcomes of discussions to policy-makers at regular intervals. This way policy-makers have access to a monitoring tool which keeps them up-to-date with public opinion

The entire report can be downloaded from the following web site: www.undp.ba

13 http://www.deliberative-democracy.net/